

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 044218

FOR DEPTY ASST SECTY SEELYE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UG, US

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS IN UGANDA

1. SINCE COMING TO POWER IN A 1971 MILITARY COUP THE
DICTATORSHIP OF PRESIDENT IDI AMIN DADA HAS ACHIEVED
INTERNATIONAL NOTORIETY FOR MASSIVE, CONSISTENT AND GROSS
VIOLATIONS OF FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS. ACCORDING TO A
1976 REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS,
AN ESTIMATED 25,000-250,000 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KILLED BY THE
REGIME IN WHICH THE ERRATIC AMIN IS THE SOLE AND UNRESTRAIN-
ED AUTHORITY.

2. INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO US INDICATES THAT THE RULE OF
LAW, IF NOT THE RULE OF REASON, HAS DISAPPEARED FROM UGANDA.
TORTURE AND INDISCRIMINATE KILLINGS ARE CARRIED OUT BY THE
UGANDAN MILITARY AND BY OTHER AGENCIES UNDER AMIN'S DIRECT
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CONTROL. THE CONSTITUTION AND CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES
WERE SUSPENDED IN 1971 FOLLOWING AMIN'S OUSTER OF PRESI-
DENT OBOTE. NO POLITICAL PARTIES, ELECTIONS OR PUBLIC
DISSENT IS PERMITTED AND THE MEDIA ARE STATE-OWNED AND
STATE-CONTROLLED. THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION HAS EITHER BEEN
LIQUIDATED OR HAS FLED INTO EXILE. CONTINUING EFFORTS TO
DEPOSE OR ASSASSINATE AMIN -- MANY OF WHICH HAVE INVOLVED

OBOTE FROM HIS TANZANIAN EXILE -- HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE

REGIME'S VIOLENCE AGAINST THE POPULACE, PARTICULARLY THE ACHOLI AND LONGI TRIBES WHICH WERE THE SUPPORT OF FORMER PRESIDENT OBOTE AND WERE BLAMED FOR BEING INVOLVED IN THE LATEST ATTEMPT, FEBRUARY 1977, TO KILL AMIN.

3. MILITARY TRIBUNALS ARE OFTEN QUICKLY ESTABLISHED TO ADJUDICATE ANY MATTER WHICH MAY HAVE ANY BEARING ON THE REGIME'S INTERPRETATION OF NATIONAL SECURITY. TORTURE IS ROUTINE. PENALTIES ARE OFTEN UNDULY HARSH WITH THE DEATH PENALTY COMMONPLACE. THE EROSION OF THE CIVIL JUDICIARY'S AUTHORITY WAS UNDERLINED IN 1972 WHEN UGANDA'S CHIEF JUSTICE WAS FORCIBLY REMOVED FROM THE BENCH AND REPORTEDLY MURDERED BY HAMMER-BLOWS WHILE IN PRISON.

4. ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS IN UGANDA ARE THE FOLLOWING INCIDENTS, THOROUGHLY REPORTED IN THE INTERNATIONAL MEDIA:

-- THE 1972 EXPULSION OF APPROXIMATELY 50,000 NON-CITIZEN ASIANS WITH LESS THAN 60 DAYS NOTICE AFTER HAVING MOST OF THEIR ASSETS SEIZED BY THE GOVERNMENT WITHOUT COMPENSATION;

-- THE 1972 MURDER BY THE UGANDAN MILITARY OF TWO AMERICAN CITIZENS -- NICHOLAS STROH AND ROBERT SEIDLE -- WHO WERE INVESTIGATING REPORTS OF ATROCITIES AND MURDERS. (THE FAMILIES OF THE TWO MEN WERE PAID ABOUT \$75,000 EACH AS CONFIDENTIAL

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COMPENSATION BY THE UGANDA GOVERNMENT);

-- THE DISAPPEARANCE AND REPORTED MURDER OF DORA BLOCH, AN AGED ISRAELI/UK CITIZEN WHO WAS IN A UGANDAN HOSPITAL WHEN HER FELLOW HOSTAGES WERE FREED FROM THE PLO HIJACKERS BY THE JULY 4, 1976 ISRAELI RAID AT ENTEBBE; AND

-- THE FEBRUARY 17, 1977 "ACCIDENTAL" AUTO DEATH OF TWO CABINET MINISTERS AND ANGLICAN ARCHBISHOP LUWUM OF UGANDA, ALLEGEDLY WHILE FLEEING IMPRISONMENT, AFTER HAVING BEEN PUBLICLY ACCUSED BY AMIN OF INVOLVEMENT IN AN ABORTED PLOT TO DEPOSE OR KILL HIM.

5. IN 1976 A SUBCOMMISSION OF THE UN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS CONCLUDED, ON THE BASIS OF THE ICJ AND OTHER REPORTS, THAT THE SITUATION IN UGANDA APPEARED "TO REVEAL A CONSISTENT PATTERN OF GROSS AND RELIABLY ATTESTED VIOLATIONS REQUIRING CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMISSION." THE COMMISSION FAILED TO ACT ON THE VIOLATIONS CONCERNING

UGANDA AND THREE OTHER COUNTRIES BUT DID, IRONICALLY,
VOTE TO ADD UGANDA TO THE COMMISSION.
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